

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Florence-Carlton Community Church

other names/site number Florence-Carlton Church

## 2. Location

street & number 20075 Old Highway 93

city or town Florence

state Montana

code MT

county Missoula

code 063

zip code 59833

X

not for publication

vicinity

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national    statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

   entered in the National Register

   determined eligible for the National Register

   determined not eligible for the National Register

   removed from the National Register

   other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
		<b>Total</b>

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/

Gothic Revival

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE

walls: WOOD/weatherboard

roof:

other:

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

---

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The Carlton Community Church rests on a grassy bench above the confluence of Carleton Creek and the Bitterroot River just a few miles north of Florence and the Ravalli/Missoula County line. The church stands as the only remaining historic non-residential building of the Carleton community. In the 1980s, the Florence-Carlton Community Church congregation organized a funding campaign and constructed a new church building south of the historic church, leaving the original building vacant. In recent years, however, the historic church has been stabilized and cleaned, and is used occasionally for weddings and other events.

The simple, iconic church is a one-story, wood-frame, rectangular building that rests on a high concrete wall foundation. Asphalt shingles cover the front-gable roof, and boxed eaves extend approximately twelve inches on all sides of the building. Exterior walls feature six-inch lapped wood clapboard and narrow cornerboards. The gothic-arched windows are one-over-one fixed panes filled with solid stained glass.

---

### Narrative Description

#### *Exterior:*

The Carlton Church is a one and one-half story, wood frame building. Typical of one-room churches throughout the West, the church is painted white, and has a rectangular footprint with a small vestibule on the front (east) elevation. Wide drop-lap siding finished with cornerboards enclose the exterior walls. Numerous cut-outs and repairs in the original siding indicate the former presence of chimney pipes. As a result of a fire during the early 1980s, the congregation replaced the original siding on the west elevation from the foundation to the bottom of the gable end. Green asphalt shingles cover the steeply pitched gable roof. The boxed eaves run parallel to the angle of the roof, and wide fascia boards wrap up into the gable ends. A small brick chimney straddles the peak of the roof at the west (rear) end of the building. A round, metal chimney protrudes from the top center portion of the north slope. At the east (front) end of the roof ridge rests a cupola on a square base. Rectangular openings on each side are topped with gothic decorations, and reveal the bell hanging within the structure. A simple wooden cross is located at the east end of the cupola's gable roof. The small one-story rectangular vestibule protrudes from the east elevation. Its steeply-pitched gable roof mirrors the angle of the main roof, and also displays bowed eaves and fascia. A round metal light fixture attached beneath the peak of the vestibule eaves contains a single incandescent floodlight.

Cement board over wood at the base of the building conceals the foundation material. Concrete stoops with metal railings lead to the doors on the east and south elevations. Two-panel wooden double doors lead from the east elevation exterior into the small rectangular vestibule. Colorful stained glass encased by a wooden frame decorate the gothic arch above the double doors. A painted metal door with false panels provides entry from the west side of the south elevation. Each of the side elevations (north and south) contains three, two-light windows with gothic arches. The lower lights are hoppers. Translucent frosted or patterned glass replaced the original stained-glass glazing in these windows.

#### *Interior:*

A community effort remodeled the church interior in 1963. Modifications included knotty-pine paneling on all interior walls. The paneling consists of wide and narrow boards with a double bead between each. The paneling covers all the walls and continues halfway up the ceiling at the same angle as the roof. A chair rail, detailed with double-rows of horizontal beading, separates the knotty pine from the original two-inch wood beadboard wainscoting that surrounds all sides of the interior of the church. Acoustic tiles cover the dropped ceiling. Five incandescent light fixtures hang from the ceiling; the three at the west side of the church appear to have originally been kerosene lamps, and now hold single bulbs. The two modern light fixtures feature frosted glass globes.

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

---

**Integrity**

The Carleton Church retains a high degree of architectural integrity. It still stands in its original location in a country setting surrounded by a manicured lawn, landscaping, and mature trees. The setting and feeling are further enhanced given that the building has not been enlarged with modern additions. Its associations with the congregation and community as a whole are long lived. In addition, its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship remain clearly evident, especially on the exterior. The interior circulation plan has also been maintained, though restoration efforts in 1963 covered the original finish materials. The original material remains intact beneath the ceiling tiles and paneling, and original fixtures and furnishings remain in use.

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

### Period of Significance

1884-1924

### Significant Dates

1884

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

n/a

### Period of Significance (justification)

The Florence-Carlton Church's period of significance runs from its construction in 1884 through 1924 when doctrinal differences within the congregation lead to its closure. Between 1884 and 1924, the building represented a social locus for the community and it is representative of the development of the community through the homesteading period in the Bitterroot Valley. Since 1924, the use of the building has been sporadic, culminating in its near abandonment; however, the church witnessed several revivals, including a major reorganization and restoration in the 1950s. Construction of a new building south of the property in the 1980s resulted in its return to occasional use at that time.

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Historic significance for this religious property is established on the merits of its architectural values and for important historic and cultural forces that the property represents. Because its significance transcends the doctrinal aspects of its history, the property meets Criteria Consideration A.

### Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Florence-Carlton Church, just north of Florence, Montana has been a significant place and social center in the community since its construction in 1884. The building is eligible for listing in the National Register under criteria A and C at a local level of significance. Under Criterion A, the Florence-Carlton Church represents the tangible effort of the influence and methods used by the Methodist Church in its development in Montana and the West. By establishing itself in stable communities, such as Great Falls, the Methodist Church provided outreach to more isolated areas, such as Florence. The church gains additional significance under Criterion C as an outstanding local example of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture characterized by its simple design and stature consistent with the financial means of a small rural congregation.

### Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Florence-Carlton Church is eligible for listing in the National Register under criteria A and C at a local level of significance. The church is eligible under Criterion A as an important local representation of the Methodist Church's procedure and influence in the development of communities in Montana and the West through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Typically, Methodist missionary bishops established missionary districts, and identified communities from which to base their evangelical practice. From these larger churches, ministers identified, traveled to, and served potential congregations in more isolated towns. This was the case at Carlton, where the nascent congregation benefited from the church at Great Falls. Carlton was, at that time, a budding agricultural community in the Bitterroot Valley and the church itself is a stately reminder of the late 1800s when small towns flourished with activity and optimism for the future. The Methodist Church generally sought to establish itself in stable communities to ensure a lasting presence, and residents often longed for the cultural familiarity of the traditions, songs, and liturgy of the Christian faith. The leaders and women's groups in the small town of Carleton rallied residents of many denominations to help construct the building, and community-wide activities allowed for its upkeep and continued use as a social locus to the present day.

The church gains additional local significance under Criterion C as an iconic example of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture. Typical of a rural church building of Montana, it is simple in stature and design, yet it references formal ecclesiastic design to the extent achievable with limited resources and a small congregation. Incorporating pragmatic architectural elements such as Gothic windows, an arched doorway, and steeple, the building is a significant example of ecclesiastic design on a rural scale.

### Early History of the Bitterroot Valley

(This section taken from Chere Justo's *Montana Main Streets, Volume Four: A Guide to Historic Hamilton*, Montana Historical Society Press, 2000, with permission from the author)

*A long time ago...everywhere on this earth there was medicine for the people...Their home life was good, they were growing up in a good way, the children, the people of long ago. The earth was clean, everything was good. There were no illnesses.<sup>1</sup>*

The Salish and Pend d'Orielle Indians tell of living in the Bitterroot Valley since the beginnings of time; the valley Spe'tlemen is the heart of their ancestral homeland. Through this broad, fertile valley flows the river called In-schu-te-sche, the River of Red Willows. Long ago, Salish elders recount, a single Salish nation inhabited what is now Western Montana; over time they formed distinctive tribes known now as the Salish and Pend d'Orielle, as well as the Couer d'Alene, Spokane, Colville, and Okinagan. For thousands of years, Salish people followed a way of life in this

<sup>1</sup> Mitch Smallsalmon (1900-1982), Salish Culture Committee Oral History Collections. Recorded April 1978.

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

mountainous country attuned to the seasons and the land – hunting buffalo and other game, catching fish, collecting plant foods and medicines, trading between tribes and bands.

White Europeans came late to this western country. The first recorded encounter here occurred in September 1805, when the Lewis and Clark Expedition traveled through the Bitterroot Valley enroute to the Pacific. Just a boy at that time, Many Horses, or Chief Victor, later recounted how the “pale-faced chiefs looked strange” to the Salish, but were welcomed at their encampment in the Sula Basin. The Salish took them in, fed them, and “gave them fresh good horses” in exchange for their tired ones. These “ellegant” horses carried the explorers toward the distant shore of the Pacific along the ancient and rugged Lolo Trail.

Nearly twenty years later, fur traders and “mountain men” began to filter through the valley, many of whom were French-Canadian, and brought with them their Christian faith. Stories of the “black robes” lead to the Salish and Nez Perce sending delegations east in search of such men who could come and teach their tribes. Father Pierre DeSmet, a Jesuit priest, answered the call and established St. Mary’s Mission in 1841. The relationship between the Salish and the Catholic mission soured, however, especially when the church made overtures to the Blackfeet, the Salish’s long-standing enemies. The mission disbanded in 1850, and Major John Owen purchased the property the same year. There, Owen opened a bustling trading post.

Shortly thereafter, in 1855, Governor Isaac Stevens traversed the area, surveying for the potential Northern Pacific Railway route, and under orders to clear the way for non-Indian settlement. At Council Grove, in an ancient pine forest, the United States government asked the Salish to abandon their Bitterroot Valley. The negotiations were confused by language barriers. The Salish resisted but finally agreed to move after the President of the United States ordered a survey and determined that the harsher Jocko Valley to the north better suited their needs. Until that decision was tendered, the Bitterroot remained closed to white settlers. But retired trappers, errant soldiers, and hopeful farmers undaunted by the express illegality of claiming land in Indian territory, had other ideas. During the 1850s and 1860s, the Bitterroot Valley gave rise to a growing cultural mosaic. Settlement fanned out around Fort Owen (where St. Mary’s Mission was reopened) and began moving deeper into the Bitterroot.

In 1870, Chief Victor died, and the following year President Grant ordered the Salish to move to the Jocko Valley Reservation. Despite threats of bloodshed, Victor’s son, Claw of the Grizzly Bear, or Chief Charlot, refused to submit to this removal. Chief Charlot and his band clung to the hope they might stay in their ancestral homeland, but white settlers moving into the valley had little interest in sharing it. They clamored for more military protections against the Indians, and in 1877 the government established Fort Missoula near the confluence of the Clark Fork and Bitterroot Rivers, at the north end of the valley. In 1889, the weary Charlot consented to lead his beleaguered people to the Jocko Reservation. On an October day in 1891, the last of the Salish began the long trip north.

Amid the Salish and non-Indian struggles, white settlers in the Bitterroot prospered amid the fertile soils. They sold their harvests to the gold camps of Bannack and Virginia City farther east. By 1870, the valley boasted 300 residents, and the following two decades witnessed much development, including roads and, in 1888, the completion of the Missoula and Bitter Root Valley Railroad, opening markets for farm products and timber. Two years later, Marcus Daly established the Bitter Root Development Company to develop the townsite of Hamilton, and more settlers streamed into the area. Through this era, the nascent community of Carleton, at the north side of the valley, also prospered and grew. By 1883, the families in the area clamored for a church.

### **History of Methodism in Montana**

Intertwined with the establishment of most of Montana’s frontier towns is the story of the birth of religious institutions. In most rural places in Montana, the first church services and the building of new church buildings was proof that a community had put down roots and established a commitment to further develop, not just religious efforts, but social, political, and economic institutions as well. Edward Laird Mills writes in *Peaks, Plains, and Pioneers* that “As a matter of fact, religion was present on the Montana frontier from the first.” Early wagon trains of Hugh Duncan and Jim Bridger observed Sunday on their way West, and services were held from the very early days in Bannack and Virginia City, sometimes given by residents in advance of an ordained man arriving.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Edward Laird Mills, *Peaks, Plains, and Pioneers* (Portland, Binfords & Mort 1947), p. 2.

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

The beginnings of Methodism in England explain its appeal in the vast open spaces of the West. In the mid-eighteenth century, British clergyman John Wesley launched the revolt against high-church Anglicanism that would become known as Methodism. An evangelical movement emphasizing simplicity of doctrine, self-help, and mutual reinforcement, Methodism flourished on England's industrial frontier—those crowded manufacturing centers where the modern working class was taking shape. As noted by historian E.P. Thompson, Wesley's approach to reaching the new urban masses "succeeded in combining in exactly the right proportions democracy and discipline, doctrine and emotionalism."<sup>3</sup> Wesley sought to take the word to the people. He advocated preaching outside of the pulpit and encouraged ministers to travel widely. While the system worked well in industrial England, it was ideal for the mobile, unsettled agricultural communities of the western United States. The U.S. branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church was formally organized in Baltimore in 1784; Bishop Francis Asbury, "The Prophet of the Long Road," oversaw the application of the Wesleyan system to American circumstances. Methodist "circuit riders" combined a compelling message with the willingness to travel, and by the 1840s the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States boasted over one million members.<sup>4</sup>

A circuit rider would often be the first representative of organized religion to reach a newly pioneered western settlement. Working in the revivalist, emotional style of the Great Awakenings, the minister might preach in a rude cabin, a barn, or under the open sky. Afterward, common meetings reinforced the Methodist message. Services included the vigorous singing of traditional hymns, and pastors encouraged church members to regularly renew their individual relationship with God. Methodism strongly encouraged social cohesion in local communities. It also created links on regional and national levels; circuit riders built ties between far-flung settlements through common literature, modes of worship, and personal interaction. Regular large conferences furthered this process of cultural consolidation.<sup>5</sup>

By the late 1860s, the Methodist Episcopal Church began to see major gains in membership and new vigor in its program. Between 1865 and 1913, its membership registered a 400 percent increase to about four million. Methodist Protestants, United Brethren, and Evangelicals experienced similar growth. Church property values soared, and affluence reflected generally prosperous times for the churches. Sunday schools remained strong and active. Publishing houses maintained ambitious programs to furnish their memberships with literature. The church cultivated higher educational standards for the clergy, and founded theological seminaries. Mission work, both home and overseas, rose on the churches' agendas. Home mission programs sought to Christianize the city as well as the Native American. Missionaries established schools for former slaves and their children.<sup>6</sup>

The Methodist system of founding bases from which new circuits could be launched proved successful in Montana as it had been elsewhere, particularly given the state's rapid development (due to its mineral resources) and the vast distances between populations (due to its geography). Methodism grew rapidly in Montana. As the frontier gave way to permanent settlement, the church was no less influential in expanding and perpetuating the communities in which it had taken root.

Amicable conditions aligned for Methodism to flourish during the settlement of Montana. The manner of bringing the "word of God" to the people, introduced Francis Asbury, was perpetuated by the first Methodist preachers.<sup>7</sup> An often told tale recounts how Methodist preachers would show up at a homestead before the family had the wagon unloaded.<sup>8</sup> Over the years the circuit preachers rode horseback or stagecoach. Later they utilized the railroad to travel the vast open spaces of Montana. From 1864, when Rev J.W. Craig held the first worship service in Bannack, Montana, through the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Methodists built and rebuilt churches, parsonages, colleges, and hospitals to serve "God's work." The pioneer preachers were a hardy lot and spread out over the state after an annual conference. The pioneer preachers

<sup>3</sup> E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence Small, "Methodism in Montana," *Religion in Montana: Pathways to the Present*, vol. 1, (Billings, MT: Rocky Mountain College, 1995) p. 132. Chere Justo, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, "Stateler Memorial Methodist Church, Willow Creek," Feb 2003, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>5</sup> Justo, "Stateler Memorial Methodist Church."

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, Small, 133-139 in Suzanne Waring, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, "First United Methodist Church Parsonage, Cascade County," October 2003, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Small, 133 in Suzanne Waring, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, "First United Methodist Church Parsonage, Cascade County," October 2003, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>8</sup> Doris Whithorn, *Bicentennial Tapestry of the Yellowstone Conference* (White Sulphur Springs, Meagher County News 1984).



Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

included Hugh Duncan, A. M. Hough, George Comfort, W.C. Shippen, J.A. Van Anda, F.A. Riggan, and the much beloved, W. W. Van Orsdel.<sup>9</sup>

These circuit riding ministers served the settlers of Montana spiritually, but they also often provided the first sense of community in the agricultural areas and mining communities. Beyond the theoretical, the establishment of a church was often the first impetus for homesteaders and miners to gather together, to work cooperatively, and even erect community buildings. Indeed, the role of the Methodist Church and other ecclesiastical ministries in the history of Montana transcends the religious to include the establishment and development of communities.<sup>10</sup>

### **Carlton Church**

(Information for this section from the Florence-Carlton Church website, <http://florencecarltonchurch.com/about-us/about/>, and John A. Forssen, "Historical Church Has New Lease on Life," *Missoulian*, 1963.)

By 1882, the Town of Carleton boasted a post office, store, and railroad station. Robert Carlton, a Roman Catholic, responded to the need for a church and cemetery, and in 1883 he deeded the land to R. C. Childs, Jacob McClain, and Alva Mason, representing the Methodist Episcopal Church. Legend relates Carlton's only stipulation was the little church must always display a cross on its steeple. Area residents began a church building that was completed and dedicated in June 1884. One of the volunteer builders, A.J. Durnford, was a cabinetmaker and constructed the beautiful bookcase still in use in the vestibule. He reportedly constructed the altar and rail as well. The Methodist Episcopal ministers served the congregation for the next 40 years, many of them circuit riders. One of the first was "Brother Van" – W. W. Van Orsdel – who with Francis Riggan traveled the area on horseback. They helped organized the little congregation who first met in homes near the present church.

Doctrinal friction, combined with the loss of the local railroad stop and more integration with the town of Florence just to the south, closed the doors of the little church about 1924. From then until after World War II the building saw very little use: one wedding in 1926 and occasional funeral services. With no maintenance, it fell into disrepair, and livestock wandered through the building. The Methodist Diocese deeded the property (WHEN?????) to the Florence-Carlton Cemetery Association, with the provision that it must always remain a church. The Cemetery Association still owns the property.

During the late 1940's and early 1950's, occasional services were held when a visiting minister could be secured, and local families helped organize Sunday School classes, which met sporadically during the school year. William Bessire, a Presbyterian home missionary from Missoula, helped promote the Sunday School efforts and also preached on a limited but regular basis. Some families who were active in this period of church revival included Walter and Etta Polette, Karl and Gladys Ostrom, Claude and Hilda Martin, Lloyd and Zella Heggen, Jules and Grace Zander, and Paul and Helen Trenk. Finally in the fall of 1954, services began on a regular basis with Presbyterian John Elliott from Missoula, who served for a year and was succeeded by Hugh Garner, also a Presbyterian, who served from September, 1955, through February, 1962. Minister Garner was then pastor of the Victor Federated Church, and Florence was viewed as part of their outreach. Minister Garner was soon dividing his time almost equally between the two valley congregations. He actively promoted a youth group, and his wife Elsie, a talented and trained musician, contributed much to the musical development of the church. It was Minister Garner also who was the chief author of the constitution of the Florence-Carlton Community Church. The constitution was formally adopted and signed by 49 charter members in April, 1957.

During the next decade, the church facilities were renovated and enlarged, and the congregation grew slowly but steadily. In addition to those families previously mentioned, others included the Davises, the Gebharts, the Hendrickses, the Keyzers, the Osterhelds, and the Rosses. A succession of ministers served on a part-time basis: Joe Caulfield and Merrill Skaug from Victor, William Kliber, Frank Grant, Richard England, and Larry Johnson. The latter became the first full-time pastor, resigning in 1982 to attend the University of Montana for an advanced degree and different vocation. After a difficult year of searching, Florence and Victor secured David Hansen of the American Baptist Churches/USA for their yoked parishes in 1983. Minister Hansen served for eight years, leaving in April, 1992, for a pulpit in Belgrade, Montana. Minister Hansen helped initiate and lead a major undertaking – the acquisition of land and the building of a new church building. Because the future congregation was not formally affiliated with any denomination, it was necessary to

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, Small, p. 135 in Suzanne Waring, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, "First United Methodist Church Parsonage, Cascade County," October 2003, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>10</sup> Suzanne Waring, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, "First United Methodist Church Parsonage, Cascade County," October 2003, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office.

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

first raise money to purchase three-plus acres and then to raise a substantial part of the money needed to build the church itself. Bonds were sold, the ABC building plan was utilized, and phase one of the building plan was completed. Services were held in the new church for the first time at Christmas of 1988.

### Architectural Significance

The Florence-Carlton Community Church represents a fine example of a simple, community-built, rural Gothic Revival ecclesiastical building exhibiting characteristic design elements such as vertical, narrow, and pointed features. These features include a steeply pitched roof (topping both the main building and the vestibule), pointed arched windows, and a tall narrow bell tower at the gable ridge. The striking simplicity of design is illustrated by the church's well-proportioned fenestration, especially in terms of window placement. Three identical two-light windows exhibiting gothic arches grace the north and south elevations accentuating the narrow linear footprint of the building.

Indeed, the church gains significance under Criterion C as an important example of the type of vernacular building tradition that took place across rural Montana. The Florence-Carlton Church serves as a striking and important local representation of a rural Gothic Revival gable-front church, evenly fenestrated and minimally adorned. Although no church records note an architect or designer for the church, these "Prairie Gothic" church designs were inspired by the medieval churches in Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Beginning in the early 19th century in England, a growing chorus of churchmen, religious philosophers, and architects espoused the Gothic Style as the only one suitable for churches. Led by Augustus Pugin and others, the Ecclesiologists, rebelled against the cool rationalism inherent in 18th century Anglican Church design and religious practices. A reform movement within the Anglican Church, Ecclesiology advocated a return to traditional medieval forms of worship within suitable church buildings. Ecclesiologically correct church buildings and furnishings were not merely decorative; they reflected the liturgical and symbolic functions of the worship service.<sup>12</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, these ideas about the inherent ability of architecture to strengthen religious experience crossed the Atlantic, and American architects embraced them. These design tenets filtered from the East Coast cities including New York, Boston, and Baltimore, to communities in the West. While new, smaller communities often did not have the financial resources to employ architects and execute all the detail recommended by Ecclesiologists, they knew what a church *should* look like, and used locally available materials to execute the essential elements. The defining design features that separated a church from the other buildings, in the American West, and exemplified in the Florence-Carlton Church, are the vestibule, bell tower, and pointed-arch (Gothic) windows.

Although the Florence-Carlton Church lacks many of the interior decorative elements synonymous with the design intent described by architectural historian Barbara Beving Long, its steep gable roof, bell tower, and pointed arch windows clearly reflect a rural interpretation of the Gothic Revival style.<sup>13</sup> Architectural Historian Chere Jiusto explained the significance of this type of rural architecture as "representative of a broad body of vernacular architecture which emerged on Montana's agricultural and homesteading frontiers. These buildings were not representative of high style...rather they exemplify the architecture of necessity and were often the result of communal building efforts."<sup>14</sup> Limited by scarce funds, Montana settlers erected simple church buildings that reflected an ecclesiastical intent via a modest tower or tall windows that pointed upward to the heavens.

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Florence-Carlton Church website, <http://florencecarltonchurch.com/about-us/about/>

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, Harding, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Barbara Beving Long, "Episcopal Churches of North Dakota," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Listing, October 1992. Accessed online at <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/64500378.pdf>, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Chere Jiusto, "Bethany Lutheran Church National Register Nomination," 1993, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office.

Florence-Carlton Community Church

Missoula County, Montana

Name of Property

County and State

Forssen, John A. "Historical Church Has New Lease on Life," *Missoulian*, 1963.

Justo, Chere. *Montana Main Streets, Volume Four: A Guide to Historic Hamilton*, Montana Historical Society Press, 2000.

Justo, Chere. National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, "Stateler Memorial Methodist Church, Willow Creek," Feb 2003, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office.

Long, Barbara Beving. "Episcopal Churches of North Dakota." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Listing, October 1992. Accessed online at <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/64500378.pdf>.

Mills, Edward Laird. *Peaks, Plains, and Pioneers*. Portland, Binfords & Mort, 1947.

Small, Lawrence. "Methodism in Montana," *Religion in Montana: Pathways to the Present*, vol. 1. Billings, MT: Rocky Mountain College, 1995.

Smallsalmon, Mitch. Salish Culture Committee Oral History Collections. Recorded April 1978.

Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1966.

Waring, Suzanne and Kate Hampton, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, "First United Methodist Church Parsonage, Cascade County," October 2003, on file at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office.

Whithorn, Doris. *Bicentennial Tapestry of the Yellowstone Conference*. White Sulphur Springs, Meagher County News 1984.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

NAD 83

1	<u>11</u> Zone	<u>723410</u> Easting	<u>5173607</u> Northing	3	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing
2	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing	4	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Carleton Church National Register boundary is a rectangle measuring 152 feet by 124 feet, centered on the building, and extending 50 feet from each elevation. See attached Site Map.

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes the historic church and grounds around it measuring 65-feet by 85-feet, sufficient to convey its historic and architectural associations.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kate Hampton

organization Montana State Historic Preservation Office

date June 10, 2010

street & number 1410 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.

telephone 406-444-7742

city or town Helena

state MT

zip code 59620

e-mail khampton@mt.gov

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Carlton Church

City or Vicinity: Florence

County: Missoula

State: MT

Photographer: Kate Hampton

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of \_\_\_\_.

See Continuation Sheets

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Florence-Carlton Community Church

street & number 20075 Old Highway 93

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Florence

state MT

zip code 59833

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Missoula County, Montana  
County and State



Florence-Carlton Community Church

Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana

County and State

---

### Photolog

Name of Property: Florence-Carlton Community Church

City or Vicinity: Florence

County and State: Missoula, MT

Photographer: Kate Hampton

Date Photographed: June 1010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Florence-Carlton Community Church, view to the Northeast.

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_Florence-CarltonCommunityChurch\_0001

Name of Property: Florence-Carlton Community Church

City or Vicinity: Florence

County and State: Missoula, MT

Photographer: Kate Hampton

Date Photographed: June 1010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Florence-Carlton Community Church, view to the South.

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_Florence-CarltonCommunityChurch\_0002

Name of Property: Florence-Carlton Community Church

City or Vicinity: Florence

County and State: Missoula, MT

Photographer: Kate Hampton

Date Photographed: June 1010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Florence-Carlton Community Church, view to the East.

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_Florence-CarltonCommunityChurch\_0003

Name of Property: Florence-Carlton Community Church

City or Vicinity: Florence

County and State: Missoula, MT

Photographer: Kate Hampton

Date Photographed: June 1010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Florence-Carlton Community Church, view to the North.

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_Florence-CarltonCommunityChurch\_0004

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State



Name of Property: Florence-Carlton Community Church

City or Vicinity: Florence

County and State: Missoula, MT

Photographer: Kate Hampton

Date Photographed: June 1010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Florence-Carlton Community Church, view to the Northeast.

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_Florence-CarltonCommunityChurch\_0001



Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State



Name of Property: Florence-Carlton Community Church

City or Vicinity: Florence

County and State: Missoula, MT

Photographer: Kate Hampton

Date Photographed: June 1010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Florence-Carlton Community Church, view to the South.

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_Florence-CarltonCommunityChurch\_0002



Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State



Name of Property: Florence-Carlton Community Church

City or Vicinity: Florence

County and State: Missoula, MT

Photographer: Kate Hampton

Date Photographed: June 1010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Florence-Carlton Community Church, view to the East.

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_Florence-CarltonCommunityChurch\_0003

Florence-Carlton Community Church  
Name of Property

Missoula County, Montana  
County and State



Name of Property: Florence-Carlton Community Church

City or Vicinity: Florence

County and State: Missoula, MT

Photographer: Kate Hampton

Date Photographed: June 1010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Florence-Carlton Community Church, view to the North.

MT\_MissoulaCounty\_Florence-CarltonCommunityChurch\_0004